

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 7675

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TAGS: PFOR, KS, JA, KN

SUBJECT: EXPATRIATE KOREAN HOMECOMING SUCCESSFUL

REF: SEOUL 7366

SUMMARY: ALMOST ONE THOUSAND MEMBERS OF PRO-NORTH KOREAN CHORYON ORGANIZATION RETURNED TO SOUTH KOREA FOR MOON FESTIVAL (CHUSOK) AND OBSERVERS CONSIDER EFFORT SUCCESSFUL. END SUMMARY.

1. SOME 700 MEMBERS OF JAPAN-BASED PRO-NORTH KOREAN CHORYON (CHOSEN SOREN) WOUND UP THEIR VISIT TO SOUTH KOREA (REFTEL) IN CEREMONY HELD AT NATIONAL THEATRE LAST WEEK. A TOTAL OF ABOUT ONE THOUSAND CHORYON MEMBERS REPORTEDLY TOOK PART IN VISIT. MAYOR OF SEOUL TOGETHER WITH MINDAN (PRO-SOUTH KOREA) CHIEF, YUN TAL-YONG PRESENTED ESSENTIALLY LOW-KEY SPEECHES TO CHORYON MEMBERS. YANG SO-HYO, "REPRESENTATIVE" OF CHORYON NOW LIVING IN OSAKA, RESPONDED BY THANKING ROKG FOR ARRANGING VISIT.

2. ALTHOUGH SOME CHORYON PARTICIPANTS TOLD PRESS THEY HAD BEEN HARASSED BY CHORYON "STAFFERS" IN JAPAN BEFORE DEPARTURE FOR KOREA, THEY SEEMED GENUINELY PLEASED WITH ROKG ARRANGEMENTS. FOR ITS PART, ROKG GAVE CHORYON VISITORS VIRTUAL CARTE BLANCHE TO GO WHERE THEY WANT AND DO WHAT THEY WANTED. YANG NOTED BEING EMOTIONALLY MOVED BY SEEING HOMELAND AND TOMBS OF HIS ANCESTORS AS
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WELL AS KOREAN ECONOMIC PROGRESS.

3. ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGEABLE ROKG SOURCES, KCIA FLOATED ORIGINAL PROPOSAL TO INVITE CHORYON HOME IN THE SPRING OF 1974. THE PROPOSAL WAS REJECTED AT THAT TIME BECAUSE OF THE VULNERABILITY OF VISITORS TO ECONOMIC PRESSURE FROM CHORYON WHICH THEN CONTROLLED MOST OF THE CREDIT UNIONS IN JAPAN'S KOREAN COMMUNITY. SINCE THEN MINDAN, THE PRO-ROK KOREAN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION IN JAPAN, HAS REVERSED ITS FORMERLY WEAK POSITION AND NOW REPORTEDLY CONTROLS THE MAJORITY OF KOREAN CREDIT UNIONS IN JAPAN. VISITORS APPARENTLY FELT THEY COULD THUS MAKE TRIP WITHOUT RESULTANT FINANCIAL HARDSHIP.

4. NEWSPAPERS HAVE RECENTLY BEEN CARRYING STORIES OF MORE ELABORATE PLANS TO FACILITATE VISITS TO SOUTH KOREA BY UP TO TEN THOUSAND CHORYON MEMBERS FOR ALL OF 1975, CULMINATING WITH THE CHRISTMAS-YEW YEAR'S HOLIDAY.

COMMENT: ROKG CONDUCTED ENTIRE VISIT IN RELATIVELY LOW KEY. JAPAN-BASED PARTICIPANTS SEEM TO HAVE ENCOUNTERED LITTLE DIFFICULTY IN TRAVELING TO THEIR ANCESTRAL HOMES AND MOST ROK OBSERVERS CONCLUDE ENTIRE VISIT WAS A DEFINITE PLUS FOR SOUTH. END COMMENT.
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